

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated June 7, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed. Claims 1 and 3 have been amended. Claims 2, 4 and 5 have been cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1 and 3 are currently pending.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Figs. 1-3 of applicant's admitted prior art in view of *Pfister* (U.S. Patent No. 3,327,945). With respect to cancelled claims 2, 4 and 5, this rejection is moot. However, with respect to claims 1 and 3, the Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As required in Chapter 2143.03 of the M.P.E.P., in order to "establish *prima facie* obviousness of the claimed invention, all the limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art." Applicants submit that neither the applicant's submitted prior art nor *Pfister*, either singularly or in combination, disclose or suggest the claimed v-shaped groove and projection.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the features set forth in now cancelled claim 2. As such, claim 1 now defines a fitting structure of a guide funnel to an inlet duct of a gas combustion device in a clothes dryer. Moreover, claim 1 comprises among other features grooves and projections which are "v-shaped."

Also, claim 3 has been amended to incorporate the features of claims 4 and 5. Thus, claim 3 now defines a clothes dryer that comprises, among other features, an inlet duct and a guide funnel, where "the inlet duct coupling member is v-shaped," and "the guide funnel coupling member is v-shaped."

These v-shaped features are not taught or suggested by the prior art. As correctly pointed out in the Office Action, applicant's admitted prior art does not show these features. (See the Office Action at pg. 2.) Also, *Pfister* does not disclose these features.

Nevertheless, the Examiner alleges that "it would have been obvious matter of design choice to design the groove and projection with 'V' forms, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the shape of a component. A change in shape is generally recognized as a design consideration within the level of ordinary skill in the art...." The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's conclusion. While a change in shape may "generally" be recognized as an obvious design choice, such is not the case where the change in shape

solves a specific problem associated with the prior art and provides an advantage not achievable with the prior art.

In claims 1 and 3, the v-shaped grooves and projections solve a stated problem. Thus, these features can not be dismissed as an obvious design choice. The specification clearly states that "as the guide funnel is prevented from being fluid by an interference of the "V" projections 120 on the inlet duct 12, the fitting of the components becomes easy." For at least the above stated reasons claims 1 and 3 are patentable over applicant's admitted prior art and *Pfister*. Applicants respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Furthermore, the Office Action rejects claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Figs. 1-3 of applicant admitted prior art in view of *Dufour* (U.S. Patent No. 5,561,732). Again, with respect to claims 2, 4 and 5, this rejection is moot. With respect to claims 1 and 3, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As stated above, in order to "establish *prima facie* obviousness of the claimed invention, all the limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art." *Dufour* fails to teach or suggest the claimed v-shaped groove and projection. Nevertheless, the Examiner once again alleges that "it would have been obvious matter of design choice to design the groove and projection with 'V' forms, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the shape of a component." As stated above, the v-shaped groove and projections provides specific advantages, benefits over the prior art and cannot therefore be an obvious design choice. For at least the aforementioned reasons, claims 1 and 3 are patentable over the combination of applicant's admitted prior art and *Dufour*. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Also, the Office Action rejects claims 2, 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Figs. 1-3 of applicant admitted prior art in view of *Pfister* (U.S. Patent No. 3,327,945) or *Dufour* (U.S. Patent No. 5,561,732) as applied to claims 1 and 3 as above, and further in view of *Sproule III* (U.S. Patent No. 6,315,005). Although the Applicant has cancelled claims 2, 4 and 5, the Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection with respect to claims 1 and 3 which now incorporate the features of claims 2, and 4-5, respectively.

As required in Chapter 2141.01(a) in the M.P.E.P., in order to rely on a reference under 35 U.S.C. § 103, it must be analogous prior art. Applicants submit that *Sproule III* is not an analogous prior art reference.

Sproule III relates to “adjustable jackets for use over insulated fluid transporting pipes or tubes.” Specifically, the reference states that “the present invention provides jackets ... which surround insulated conduits, such as pipes and tubes. Such conduits are used exclusively in industrial piping systems such as in various refineries, petrochemical, power and pulp and paper plants.” *Sproule III* does not relate to clothes dryers as recited in the claimed invention. Specifically, *Sproule III* does not relate to an assembly structure of a guide funnel and an inlet duct of a gas combination device for burning gas to produce hot air to dry a drying object introduced into a drying drum. Therefore, for at least the aforementioned reasons claims 1 and 3 are patentable over *Pfister*, *Dufour* and *Sproule III*. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

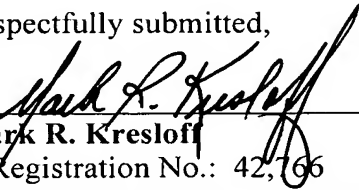
Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: November 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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